

REF: 672HIA-002
YOUR ref: CaselD 19522

4 October 2022

The South African Heritage Resources Agency
111 Harrington Street
Cape Town

Attention: Briega Williams

RE: Searcher proposes to undertake a 3D seismic survey off the West Coast of South Africa. The proposed project area is located between approximately 256 km offshore of St Helena Bay, extending north along the western coastline to approximately 220 km offshore of Hondeklip Bay. The survey area at the closest point is approximately 218 km offshore of the coast of the Western and Northern Cape.

We refer to your letter of interim comment dated 12 September 2022.

It is noted in paragraphs six and seven of the letter, that the need for assessing the presence of maritime heritage and, most notably, shipwrecks in the research is expressed. It further notes that mitigation measures must be included should any shipwrecks be recorded.

We appreciate the concerns raised. We must, however, note that the depth of the seafloor in the specific application area varies between 1500, and 3600, meters (SLR, 2022). We do not foresee that there can be any impact on wrecks on the seafloor at those depths due to the proposed survey activity.

The potential of discovering unknown wrecks with the 3D seismic survey is also very slim due to the depth and resolution of data recorded. However, research has shown potential for discovering wrecks at depth, and examples of exploration identifying wrecks at 1600mbsl exist (Irion, 2022; Church et al, 2004). Considering the above, we propose that the following be included in the Environmental Management Plan for the project:

- survey positioning data and/or any resulting information that could aid in discovering offshore heritage resources, such as shipwrecks, will be shared with SAHRA.

We believe the additional study for inclusion in the existing HIA will not add to assessing the project's impacts. By adding the proposed management measures, we consider it will be sufficient to address the potential benefits of the survey to ward maritime heritage.

I am available to discuss this matter further if required, and thank you for considering this letter.

Wouter Fourie (*Professional Archaeologist – ASAPA, Professional Heritage Practitioner – APHP*)

Director

PGS Heritage (Pty) Ltd

Reference:

Church, R.A, Warren, D.J, Weirich, J.B and Ball, D.A. 2004. Underwater Intervention 2004.
Irion, J.B., 2002. Cultural resource management of shipwrecks on the Gulf of Mexico outer continental slope. In 2nd MIT Conference on Technology, Archaeology, and the Deep Sea (April, 2002).
SLR, 2022. 3D Seismic Survey Underwater Acoustics Modelling for the Searcher Seismic Orange Basin South Africa.